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GREEK AND LATIN IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS OF WISCONSIN.¹

THE entire question of Greek in the high schools of Wisconsin can be dismissed with very few words. There is very little Greek taught in the state in the public schools. In 1901-2, out of a total of 19,965 pupils attending these schools, only 138 were taking Greek, and of this number 87 were found in one city alone. Several schools which a few years ago reported small classes of from 2 to 6 or 8 taking Greek, last year reported none. It seems to me that the reasons are not hard to find.

First, perhaps, is the comparative newness of the state, and the fact that the inhabitants in the years past have been more strenuous in their endeavors to make a living than to become highly intellectual. There has not been leisure for so "impractical" a subject as Greek.

A second reason of course, has been the general tendency to take up scientific subjects, which have been made more attractive by laboratory methods and equipments.

A third reason, closely connected with the other two, and more important, perhaps, than either, is the fact that the principals of many of our high schools were not students of the classics. (In the city referred to, one man, a classical student, is probably largely responsible for the large number.) What figures I have been able to find will be given in tables to follow.

Turning to the question of the Latin, we find much reason for encouragement, and also some dangers confronting us. A few figures first, will aid in understanding the situation. These figures have to do with only four-year high schools. A very few three-year schools teach a little Latin, but it does not seem worth while to note them here. The state superintendent's report for 1885-86 shows that in the natural-science courses (the only language is English) there were 4,115 students; mod-

¹A paper read at the Classical Conference of the Michigan Schoolmasters' Club, held at Ypsilanti, Mich., March 31-April 1, 1904.

ern language, 1,499; ancient language, 939. The students of the latter course (mostly Latin) made but 14.33 per cent. of the whole. In 1894-95 (nine years later) this has been increased to 19 per cent.; and in 1896-97, to 23.4 per cent. Note that in 1885-86, 1,499 were in the German course, and 939 in the Latin; in 1894-95, 2,128 in German, 2,072 in Latin; in 1896-97, 3,095 in German, 3,058 in Latin. The figures thus far have not reported the independent high schools, which include some of the largest in the state. Include them, and we find: 1885-86: English course, 4,548; modern classical, 1,672; ancient classical, 1,095; 1901-2 (16 years later, the first year since 1885 to give independent schools): English course, 10,167; German, 4,853; ancient classical, 4,945. Here we find the ancient classical passes the German by 92; while the number in the ancient classical is now 24.77 per cent. of the whole—an increase in sixteen years of 9.81 per cent. The more interesting fact is that the Latin has gained so rapidly upon the German and finally exceeded it in numbers.

The independent schools referred to are at the present time thirteen in number, in nine cities and towns. An examination of five of these cities shows the following statistics:

	German	Latin	Greek
La Crosse.....	176	200	5
Madison.....	213	200	15
Racine.....	98	168	0
West Superior.....	66	82	0
Milwaukee (three schools).....	564	726	87
Total.....	1,117	1,376	107

Or take the entire number of thirteen schools in the nine cities and towns, and we find: English, only 1,189; German, 1,405; ancient classical, 1,652 (107 Greek); difference between the German and ancient classical, 247.

In 1901-2 the total cost for instruction was as follows: German, \$32,175; Latin, \$39,584; Greek, \$1,862—a total of \$41,446 for the ancient languages, against \$32,175 for the German; a difference of \$9,271.

As I have said, these figures seem to give much cause for encouragement, and, in fact, I believe there is reason for it. I am of the opinion that very soon there may be a reaction toward the languages, and I fancy that in Wisconsin it has already begun. One reason for thinking so is that for the first time in its history, the state university has made a foreign-language requirement for entrance, which will cause a much larger number to study Latin in the next few years. The attitude, too, of leading scientific men in the state university will have a marked tendency to turn more students to the Latin. Professor F. E. Turneaure, dean of the college of engineering of the university, said last fall, in the annual meeting of the Northeastern Wisconsin Teachers' Association, that he regarded four years of Latin as one of the best possible preparations for the engineering course. He urged strongly that such preparation be made by students contemplating such a course. Under date of March 19, 1904, he writes as follows:

We have a good many students coming to us with the modern classical preparation, and it is our feeling that these students are among our best men. We certainly think that four years of Latin is a most excellent course of study for preparation for the engineering school, and we accept it quite as willingly as two years of German or French, together with two years of other studies. We are, indeed, very glad to get students who have the ancient classical preparation, as we usually find them quite clear-headed, strong students.

A strong statement, coming from the dean of a school that receives nearly three hundred new students each fall.

On the other hand, there is a danger confronting us; for I seriously question whether we are prepared for any marked reaction in our favor. There is much that must be said by way of warning.

Far too much of the teaching of Latin in the Wisconsin schools is old-fashioned, wooden. Some is neither old- nor new-fashioned, but positively bad. I have heard men say that the teacher most easy to find is the Latin teacher. That may be true. My regret is that it has been so often assumed that all who offer themselves can really teach. More time in looking for Latin teachers, and, may I say in very positive tones, more ability on the part of those whose duty it is to select, would

greatly help results. But the trouble is with the teacher. Almost anyone can "hear a recitation." The number that really teach is not so large. The difference is fundamental. Were we to grant—which we cannot do—that all the teachers are able to do the drill and grind of our own school days, that would not be enough. Such methods will not do today. Science-teaching is no longer text-book grind. The boys and girls want to see and handle the things of which they read. They want to try for themselves the experiments which their authors say can be performed. They want to prove the statements of the book. It is a natural method. If the language teachers of the schools are to get and keep the respect of their pupils, they must have similar methods. They must be able to picture to their pupils the ancient city where Cæsar and Cicero and Virgil and Sallust lived and wrote, and they must be able to picture the life of the times. I do not blame the boy in the Cæsar and Cicero classes for becoming restless and muttering "stuff," as he leaves the classroom, if there is never anything but drill upon verbs, moods, and cases. He reads of a forum. He would see it if there is or was such a thing. He would like to know its size and shape, and a lot of its history, and have before him something that will help him to reconstruct for himself those scenes. He would like to know whether any part of it remains today. If so, what, how does it look, etc. In the great majority of cases the teacher cannot tell him. She does not know. She may have read the notes and introductions of one or two editions of her author, but she by no means fully comprehends them. She could not step to the board and draw an outline of the forum. She could not sketch the seven hills and the Tiber. She could not tell many of the stories of the early days of the city; much less tell of its founding and extensions and fortifications. These things the boy wants to know, but the teacher cannot tell. The boy, when he reads Virgil, would know what sort of a house the people lived in in those days. He would have its outline before him, and the various parts explained. He would see some of its furniture; their wall paintings and mosaics; the people in the house, their dress, etc. These things he would know. But the teacher can-

not tell. The boy would like to know about the Roman army, a Roman triumph, a prison, a sacrifice. He would know, as he reads of the Roman kings and emperors, more than their names, and when they were born and when they died. What did they do for their city? What of their individual traits? I do not mean those facts which the general or ancient histories tell, but matters of especial and peculiar interest to the boy. He would know, too, of the everyday life of the people. Did they ever play? What were their amusements? He has heard of the Colosseum, the Circus, the Bath, but were there any such things? What were they really like? What did they do there anyway? The Romans, he says, are always praying to the gods, offering sacrifices, etc. But what did they do? Where did they do it? How did they do it? Are there any temples standing today? Who built them? What *did* they look like? What *do* they look like? These things the boy wants to know, but the teacher cannot tell. At best, the average teacher has but a little smattering of knowledge along these lines. She has read an article or two, or a book or two, but she cannot really tell of these things, or draw an outline; nor has she illustrations to show. In short, were a dozen unlabeled photographs of the more important ruins in Rome put into the hands of the average teacher, he or she would not know what they were. She could not talk in an interesting way for a half-hour about any or all of them.

What is the trouble? Are these simply general accusations without foundation, or are they based on fact?

In all matters of common concern, as well as in affairs of special moment, it is the eyewitness who receives attention. The one who bears personal testimony merits respect. Him would we hear.

It has been my duty and privilege the past four years to visit a considerable number of the high schools of Wisconsin, and to get reports of a large number of others through men who have visited them. What I have said and shall say is based on this direct knowledge. I have found a very few really poor teachers. These are being or have been removed. I have found a considerable number who are doing fair work, and possibly may

become good teachers. I have found only a few who are now really good teachers. My opinion has been confirmed by that of other inspectors from the state department and from the state university. As I have said, the teaching is too often lifeless, while the average high-school boy or girl is by no means without life.

What is to be done? It is not enough to say conditions are bad or unsatisfactory, without attempting to correct them. If I have made a true statement of the case, something should be done. Certainly better teachers should be employed. The inspectors from the various higher institutions have done much in impressing this fact upon the minds of principals and school boards. But if these officials are to employ better-qualified teachers, they must be able to find them. The university and the colleges must furnish them. The normal schools in Wisconsin cannot furnish them, and are giving up the attempt; for the inspectors have not been slow to object to teachers with such meager training as these schools in Wisconsin give for high-school work. The university and colleges, then, must give more and more attention to those who expect to teach the subject. It has been our custom for several years, at Ripon College, to give courses of considerable fulness upon the life of the Romans, the founding and growth of the city, and the ancient monuments therein, and to offer a teachers' course to those seniors who have taken certain other courses leading to it. In every case we require as a prerequisite the two courses above referred to, and supplement that work with much special drill upon these lines. Hundreds of illustrations are used—photographs and slides—and we insist that those who intend to teach shall understand them well, and be able to draw outline maps of Gaul, of ancient Rome, and of the Forum. We endeavor to acquaint all members of this class with the most helpful books and maps along this line, and finally we refuse to recommend any as teachers of Latin who have not successfully completed this work. I know that other institutions are doing similar work, and that I am suggesting nothing new; but the number of teachers in the state that have not had such training is still very large.

I know, too, that last year and the year before, and quite frequently, young women have been recommended by the State University as Latin teachers who have had no especial fitness for the place. It is not enough that a person was an all-around good student in college and studied Latin. She should have done much special work with a definite aim to become a Latin instructor. By way of illustration: I met a teacher but a few weeks ago who was teaching all of the high-school Latin. In a Cicero class she made serious blunders in construing subjunctives, and in the beginning class there was absolutely no life. The principal (not a Latin student) said she had been elected purely upon the recommendation of the university. He knew she was not doing good work, and said she could better teach science, and that he thought he should transfer her to that work another year. I fear that will mean another mistake, for if she prepared to teach Latin, she cannot be expected to be strong in science; while it is sure that she did not prepare for science teaching, else she would never have accepted a position as a Latin teacher. I met recently another Latin teacher, a college graduate. She is by nature a teacher. She is doing fine work in drill and translation, but said that she had no training at all in Roman archæology. Yet she graduated from college only three years ago this spring. She asked for suggestions, and a few were offered with reference to the first-year work. The suggestions were to the effect that many opportunities might be found, even in connection with the translation of detached sentences, to touch upon the life of the Romans. When the words *puer* and *puella*, etc., come up, stop and compare the life of the Roman boy and girl with that of the American child. Speak of their dress and sports and food. Tell them simply many of these things that will arouse their interest and make them earnest and eager to work hard, so as to be able to read first-hand about these things in the Latin authors. She took the suggestions in the spirit in which they were given, but said: "Before the teacher can talk about these things to her class, she must know something of them herself."

We have met, too, in Wisconsin schools teachers that have

come from leading colleges in Ohio, highly recommended, and yet who were absolutely at sea along these lines. They had done the regular work of the freshman and sophomore years, with some elective courses, and were highly recommended, and yet had never done a bit of work along the line of that for which I plead.

Another matter: As a visitor of high schools and inspector of their equipment, I have been astonished to find how, in almost every case, Latin teachers go on from year to year without any equipment. Teachers of science ask and receive every year or so \$50 or \$100 for apparatus and books; but the Latin teacher neither asks nor does she receive. To him that asketh shall be given. The reply to the question about their equipment is: "No; we haven't much of anything. The principal and board think we need only a bare room and a text of our author." Many times not even a map is to be found. To such we say: "Keep asking; make it apparent that you do really need it, and never let up. Get a map, get a few illustrations—Perry pictures, if you can't do better; a few books. Keep demanding, prove your ability, and don't sit meekly by and see your colleagues in other lines take all of every appropriation for apparatus and books in their lines." We have been urging this point very strongly, have recommended certain maps and definite lists of books; and already some results have been attained. The university is accomplishing much in this direction. They have this year, for the first time, as I have already said, required two years of foreign-language study for admission. This will naturally increase the number of students studying Latin, and will be the means of putting Latin into a considerable number of high schools where it has not been taught before. They, too, are recommending lists of books, such as we have suggested, and the suggestions of the university are apt to be looked upon as requirements that must not be slighted.

Such is about the situation in the high schools in Wisconsin today. I have tried to give a fair statement of conditions there. I am of the opinion that our Latin work will average very well with that of other states. Forces are working which will surely

bring about better results within a few years. The solution of the different problems lies with the colleges, and if these are alert, all can be successfully solved. Fuller courses for those intending to teach Latin, more care in recommending teachers, a real interest in and vital contact with the teachers in the schools on the part of the Latin teachers of the higher institutions—a contact brought about by occasional visits and lectures upon the subjects pertaining to Roman archæology that will interest young students—these are the solutions. Personally, I believe most heartily in this kind of contact. We in Ripon have thus presented the popular side of Latin study to more than seventy-five audiences of teachers, students, and citizens outside our own community, during the past three or four years. We believe that some awakening has been accomplished in this way, and that teachers especially have been aroused to the possibilities that the subject offers for wide-awake class-room work. Let all Latin teachers in this conference resolve anew to know “the Eternal City” as never before—by personal visit, if possible; through the eyes of another, if necessary—and our discussions and deliberations here will prove of the greatest profit.

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